

# LIMERICK SOCIALIST

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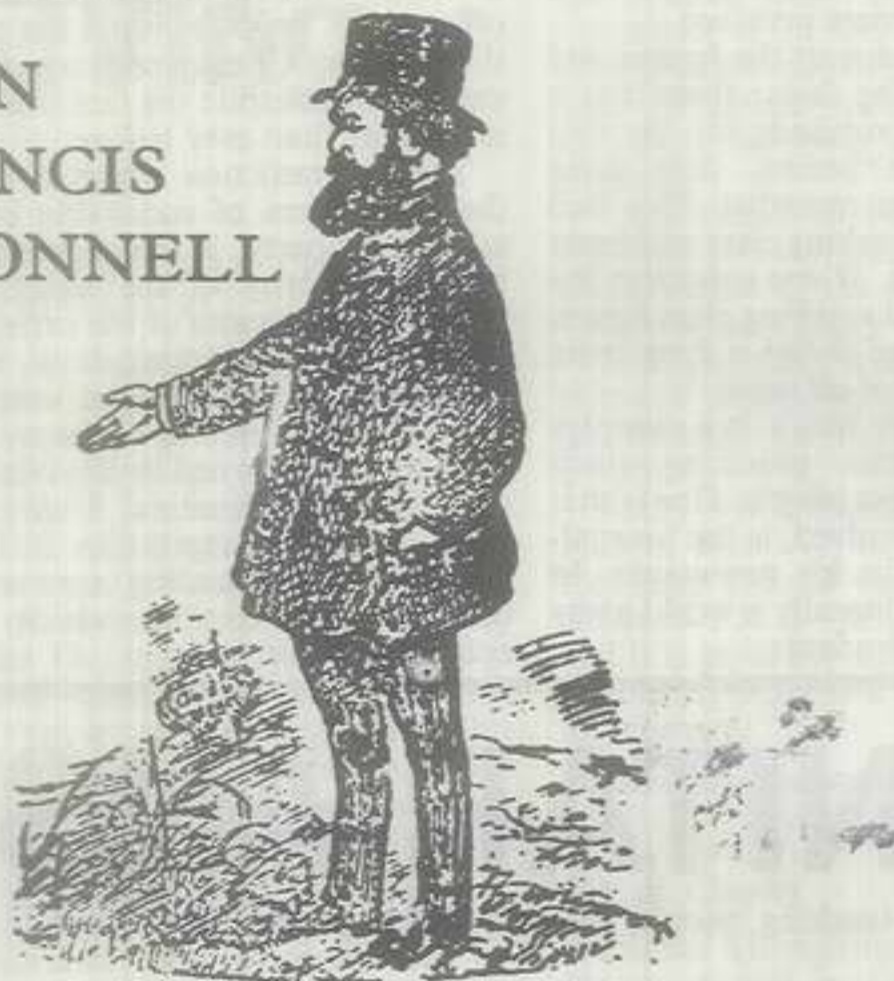
Vol. 2 No. 4

THE  
VOICE  
OF THE  
WORKER

That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic *James Connolly*

In search of . . .

JOHN  
FRANCIS  
O'DONNELL



## ELECTION RETROSPECT



## EVICION ECONOMICS



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# CRIME STORY

Limerick city has a Garda establishment of 200 and despite their efforts, an average of 15 crimes will be committed this week. Crimes ranging from robbery and drunken driving to offending public morals. Over £215 in fines will be imposed and persons will be disqualified from driving for a total of three years.

These average figures are based on the results of a survey which took into account published court cases for January and February of 1973.

The figures show that for the two months a total of 125 cases were published and of these, 97 involved people living in working class housing schemes.

In 16 cases it was said that the prior consumption of drink had a direct bearing on the committed crimes. Over £1,720 was imposed by way of fines and defendants were sentenced to a total of ten years, seven months, and 21 days in prison.

Disqualification from driving amounted to 24 years and three months while two years in prison and detention sentences were suspended. Young offenders (under 19) were ordered to be detained for a total of four years.

People with middle class addresses were involved in 25 cases, while men whose addresses were stated to be the Simon Community, appeared in four cases.

From these figures it would appear that most of the petty crime in Limerick is committed by people from working class areas. However, there are additional factors which must be taken into account before arriving at definite conclusions.

Under the present Court system of administering justice certain circumstances discriminate against working class people. Technically the Court is designed to serve a twofold function: (1) to punish the crime, and (2) to ensure that the punished does not again appear in Court.

The second function, however, has failed in what is probably a majority of cases. Week after week, the same Limerick working class areas are named in cases as having produced yet another batch of young and not so young offenders.

Various factors contribute to ensure that working class areas are continually mentioned in the newspapers in Limerick. The main factor is remand cases. From the survey over the two months it emerged that in 97 cases out of a total 125, working class people were involved.

However, remand cases distort the figures and also expose some interesting facts: there was a total of 27 working class remands for the two months, yet in the same period, only three middle class remands were recorded. This had the effect of ensuring that working class addresses were kept in the public eye. If one subtracts the remand cases from the total working class figure, the overall crime percentage shows a drop from over 75% to just over 50% of all cases.

Yet this is only one major factor in a complex situation. There are certain practices which militate against working class people. One is that the person most directly involved, is the journalist who reports the case for his newspaper. In Limerick the reporters are literally a world away from the working class defendants.

Limerick journalism has long been the preserve of representatives of the local middle-classes, so therefore, in a class context, it is inevitable that the reporter identifies with the legal institutions, i.e., the middle class solicitors, court clerks, and Garda officers.

One reason why working class cases seem disproportionately high is that very often middle class cases never appear in print. Selective reporting and the suppression of certain court cases invariably discriminate against the working class.

Newspapers reflect a class interest of their owners, so therefore the odds are weighed heavily against workers with little money or influence. Representations to keep these cases out of public print are seldom as successful as those involving wealthy defendants.

The vast majority of indictable offences committed locally and nationally are crimes against property. These offences are in the main made up of thefts from capitalism (banks, shops, bookies, offices, etc). Property is not the principal cause of these thefts. Crime continues to rise in Britain and Ireland despite the fact that living standards are higher than ever before.

The contradiction which is the root cause of the main form of indictable crime, i.e. crimes against property, is that between the ownership by the minority of the means of production, property and wealth at the expense of the majority, mainly the working class, who produce all the wealth in society. Last year's survey, which showed that over 70% of the wealth of Southern Irish society is owned by 5% of the people clearly underlines this situation. Since most crime is the effect of which capitalism is the cause, there is no hope of eliminating crime while the property relations which give rise to it continue to exist.

## THE 'HUMANITARIANS'

To judge from the amount of newspaper space devoted to the "charitable" activities of the Limerick Branch of the Variety Club of Ireland, a stranger could be forgiven for thinking that Limerick must be one of the most charitable and poverty-free cities in the world.

That such is not the case has been shown in successive annual reports of the Limerick Social Service Centre. The current report of the Centre clearly states that property and social problems generally steadily increasing in spite of the much-publicised "charitable" doings of voluntary associations of all sorts.

Last November—Friday 24 to be precise—the Limerick Variety Club honoured TV personality, Bunny Carr, with the club's Humanitarian Award for 1972, as the "outstanding humanitarian of the year".

The presentation took place at the Royal George Hotel, and is made annually for work done for the "underprivileged."

In making the award, Mr. Stuart Clein, main guy of the club, said: I would like to mention a few things about Bunny. One of his greatest claims to charity, I am told, is taking part in charity walks in Dublin, which he does very regularly, because seemingly, one of his greatest hatreds is walking, and many's the time he has staggered into Baldoyle—after a 4½ miles walk from Dublin's G.P.O.—suffering from very sore feet, ALL IN THE NAME OF CHARITY!!

"But seriously," he continued, "not many of you know that Bunny has dedicated his entire career through his working with the Catholic

Communications Centre, teaching people how to help others . . ."

Mr. Clein's performance in getting away with this kind of humbug is also worthy of an award.

Walking forms a normal part of the lives of most Irish people, especially workers and housewives. It is also considered a healthy, recreational exercise or pastime, but it can lay no special claim to charity. Should such be the case, then most of Limerick's 60,000 population could rightly claim the "much-coveted trophy" bestowed on "humanitarian" Bunny. Many, daily, going to work and to shop, walk more than Mr. Carr's once-a-year 4½ miles epic.

But, let it be known, Mr. Carr is in the Catholic Communications Centre not through dedication but for what he can get out of it in hard cash for his work as a professional communicator.

It is fashionable nowadays, in Limerick as elsewhere, to have all "charitable" posts staffed by ex-Army and ex-Garda officers, and Bank Managers (retired).

Many of these 'old comrades' gravitate along a well-trodden path to positions in the Hospitals Trust, E.S.B., C.I.E., Radio Eireann Authority, Sugar Company, Shannon Airport, S.F.A.D.Co., Aer Lingus, Heart Foundation, Gorta, Civil Defence, Bangladesh and Africa Famine Funds, Social Service Centre, to mention a dozen, which carry a "honorarium" of anything varying from £1,000 to £3,000 annually, added to which is a generous pension, or sinecure, for those heroes who managed to stay alive during the "Emergency", 1939-'45 . . . and since!

It is also a fact that before their appointments to these lucrative and "charitable" posts, most of the "personalities" showed no interest whatsoever in charity, love of neighbour, goodwill to man, liberality to the poor, alms-giving, kindness and benevolence, visiting the sick and sorrowing or those in prison, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and putting others before themselves.

The idea of taking part in political action to change the present economic system in order to tackle social problems at their root and thereby eliminate preventable poverty has, apparently, been rejected by the "humanitarians" concerned. Indeed, their skilful use of political lobbying and influence in securing the "charitable" appointments shows how keen the "dedicated educators" are in preserving the economic and political status quo.

Finally, for the record and benefit of all suffering humanity, hereunder is the list of "humanitarians" (with name of Club in parentheses) who have received the Variety Club Humanitarian Award to date.

- 1965 Noel Murphy, Cork (rugby).
- 1966 Joe Carr, Dublin (golf).
- 1967 Mick Tynan, Limerick (hurling).
- 1968 Mrs. Maeve Kyle, Belfast (athletics).
- 1969 Mr. Paddy D'Arcy, Limerick (rugby).
- 1970 Christy O'Connor, Cork (golf).
- 1971 Maureen Potter, Dublin (comedienne).
- 1972 Bunny Carr, Dublin (walking).

Addresses may be had via the telephone directory. (British and American papers please copy).



## In search of . . .

## PART ONE

by Jim Kemmy

John Francis  
O'Donnell

"Do I chafe at the transition? Philip, 'tis the common lot—Do your duty, live your lifetime, say your prayers and be forgot".

("Limerick Town"—G. F. O'Donnell)

## INTRODUCTION

"Who was John Francis O'Donnell? Why should he have a memorial? Why should his memory be preserved?" These questions were first posed by the editor of *The Irish Monthly* in 1888 (page 690 of the magazine's sixteenth yearly volume). And it was no mere coincidence, eighty years later, that caused the leading literary critic of the *Sunday Times* to pause in his review of an anthology of nineteenth century poetry, which included two of O'Donnell's poems, and inevitably ask: "And who was John Francis O'Donnell?" The question was relevant, and is still the invariable response of most people to the introduction of the poet's name.

("Limerick Town"—J. F. O'Donnell).

John Francis O'Donnell is one of the forgotten men of Irish poetry. Limerick is not noted for its interest in its literary sons, but the almost total neglect of O'Donnell and his writings is not easy to explain.

The names and works of the two other Limerick City poets of the nineteenth century, Gerald Griffin (1803-40) and Michael Hogan (1832-99), continue to attract attention. Streets have been named after them; their books are to be found in proud places in Limerick's public libraries; readings from their poetry are regularly given; press articles about them and reprints of their

poems are frequently published; paintings of them are on permanent display; lines and characters from their writings form a well-known part of Limerick folk-lore.

But oblivion has been the faith of O'Donnell and his life's work. Apart from his out of print books and some scattered articles written about him after his death in long-forgotten papers of the nineteenth century, O'Donnell has received only the scantiest attention. His books are not available in Limerick libraries; no street has been named in his memory; his poetry is included in few anthologies, and mention of his name usually evokes blank stares. It is also poignantly ironic that Cornwallis Street, the street where he was born, has been re-named after his fellow-poet, Gerald Griffin.

But the poet had his admirers—even if one has to go a long way back to find them. Sixty-eight years ago an act of homage was made to O'Donnell by a Limerick society. The poet had the distinction of having his birthplace marked with a stone plaque. High on the front wall of 20 Gerald Griffin Street reposes a memorial to his memory. The plaque, erected by the Limerick Young Ireland Society, bears the words:

John Francis O'Donnell  
Patriot - Poet  
Born in this house 1837.

O'Donnell's short, uneventful life ended on May 7th, 1874. Like his fellow Limerick poet, Gerald Griffin, he died at the early age of 37. From a working class attitude, O'Donnell has a special claim to fame. He was one of James Connolly's favourite poets. Connolly used the lines of one of O'Donnell's poems, *In The Night Time: An Artisan's Garret*, as the preface to

chapter sixteen of his book, *Labour In Irish History*:

"Is a Christian to starve, to submit, to bow down  
As at some high consecrated behest,  
Hugging close the old maxims, that 'Weakness is strength',  
And 'Whatever is is the best'?  
O, texts of debasement! O, creed of deep shame!  
O, Gospel of infamy treble.  
Who strikes when he's struck, and takes when he starves,  
In the eyes of the Lord is no rebel".

Further in the same chapter Connolly wrote:

"The Irish working class exiles in Great Britain saw that the nationalist aspirations of their race pointed to the same conclusions, called for the same action, as the material interests of their class—viz., the complete overthrow of the capitalist government and the national and social tyranny upon which it rested. Any thoughtful reader of the poems of J. F. O'Donnell—such for instance, as 'An Artisan's Garret', depicting in words that burn, the state of mind of the unemployed Fenian artisan of Dublin, beside the bedside of his wife dying of hunger— . . . cannot wonder at the warm reception journals containing such teaching met in Great Britain amidst the men and women of Irish race and of a subject class."

No serious attempt has yet been made to answer the old questions about O'Donnell. As the centenary of his death approaches, perhaps this is a suitable time to look at the man behind the plaque and to bring down his memory from its lonely perch, back into the market-place of Limerick life.

## A LIMERICK CHILDHOOD

O'Donnell was the son of a small shopkeeper, and lived over his father's shop in Cornwallis Street. He received his primary education in the schools of the Christian Brothers. In his introduction to *Poems*, a collection of O'Donnell's poetry published in 1891, Richard Dowling stated: "I should like to think his education had not been hindered by much ordinary schooling." Later, when he came to write poetry and prose, O'Donnell made free use of Latin and French,

and was also familiar with German. He acquired an early and fluent knowledge of shorthand so that his pen could keep pace with his inspiration.

The childhood scenes in the midst of which O'Donnell grew up impressed their marks indelibly on his imagination. The house in which he lived was bordered by the Walls of Limerick and Garryowen on the one side and by the Mungret Street, High Street and the market-place on the other. Many of his poems contain filial references to Limerick and scenic descriptions of the city the surrounding countryside. And it was as a city child that O'Donnell, in his poem *Limerick Town*, looks back on his boyhood memories, on the "things I look have longed to see":

Here I've got you, Philip Desmond, standing in  
the market-place,  
'Mid the farmers and the corn sacks, and the  
hay in either space,  
Near the fruit stalls, and the women knitting  
socks and selling lace.

There is High Street up the hillside, twenty shops  
on either side,  
Queer, old-fashioned, dusky High Street, here  
so narrow, there so wide,  
Whips and harness, saddles, signboard, hanging  
out in quiet pride.

Up and down the noisy highway, how the market  
people go!  
Country girls in Turkey kerchiefs—poppies  
moving to and fro—  
Frieze-clad fathers, great in buttons, brass and  
watch seals all a show.

Rolled the waggons, swore the carters, outside  
in the crowded street,  
Horses reared, and cattle stumbled, dogs barked  
high from loads of wheat,  
But inside the room was pleasant, and the air  
with thyme was sweet.

In 1851, when O'Donnell was fourteen years of age, he began to contribute verses to the *Kilkenny Journal*. When he was seventeen he achieved the ambition of all young Irish poets of the period: his verses were published in the *Nation* in 1854. In submitting his poetry to the *Nation*, O'Donnell anticipated Yeats's wish to be linked in the memory of his countrymen with three of the *Nation* poets:

Nor may I less be counted one  
With Davis, Mangan, Ferguson,  
Because, to him who ponders well  
My rhymes more than their rhyming tell  
Of things discovered in the deep . . .

Describing O'Donnell's emotions on reaching the goal of publication in the *Nation*, Richard Dowling has written:

A youth with O'Donnell's intensely patriotic nature must have been fired with feelings of intolerable joy on finding himself in the intellectual Mecca of the faithful. His swift, young spiritual sight, glancing backward and forward through the years, must have seen the abstract glories of his desires there and then taking concrete shape. Ever since its foundation, the *Nation* has been the Parnassus of Irish National poetry . . . Davis, Mangan, Mitchel, Duffy, Florence McCarthy, Dalton, Williams, "Speranza," McGee, shone in the seeing eyes of young O'Donnell as radiant gods when he took his place in the ranks of the *Nation* . . . Into the flaminian order of the race had this unknown Limerick lad been admitted. He, John Francis O'Donnell, seventeen years old, summoned to raise his voice in the choir where the cadences of Davis and Mitchel, and Mangan and Duffy and McGee, were echoing still . . .

## LIMERICK SOCIALIST

It was also in 1854 that the schoolboy poet contributed his first verses to the Limerick press and these appeared in the Limerick Reporter.

O'Donnell wished to earn his living as a writer in some form, but a career as a full-time poet offered little financial prospect. His decision to become a reporter was considered in an article by "Owen Roe" in *The Shamrock* in its edition of February 2nd, 1877:

*When O'Donnell had seen enough of the world to come to the conclusion that, in order to live one must work, and that in order to work one must need to know the particular taste for a particular business—and which people call a vocation—he determined to make a headlong plunge into the waters. The plunge was effected, and proved successful. The youth had always a hankering after letters. In fact he was bold enough to suppose that he could keep above the water—viz., live by the power of the pen, and that power alone. Now this was a very audacious idea; and to a then tyro, like O'Donnell, it may appear rash. But there was a tide in his affairs which he took—to use a Shakesperian idea—at the flood.*

The tide which he took at seventeen swept him along through a variety of journals and cities in his twenty years working life.

(TO BE CONTINUED).

FROM **IN THE NIGHT TIME  
AN ARTISAN'S GARRET**  
by J. F. O'Donnell.

*Tink, chink: 'tis the rain on the roof—  
The dull, the monotonous rain;  
And there comes from the corner a querulous cry—  
The cry of a creature in pain.  
I see that white face though the garret is black,  
For the darkness refuses a ray.  
A piteous expression, pinched, asking for food,  
And longing in sleep for the day.  
O child of my heart, hush that terrible wail,  
It creeps through my marrow and brain:  
The barns overflow with the wealth of the year,  
Yet the robbers deny thee a grain.*

Lord! matched with the torture of body and soul  
I count swiftest death but a trifle;  
'Twere better than starve to fall under the hail,  
Or be clubbed by the butt of a rifle.

*Tink, chink: 'tis the rain on the roof;  
And my wife murmurs quick in her dreams;  
Is she walking once more where we met and we wed  
In that dear land of meadows and streams?  
Ah, perish the fancy, the selfish decent—  
How she haggles and hucksters for more—  
She is pawning her cloak for a morsel of bread  
For the little one stretched on the floor.  
And her once tender heart's like the heart of a Jew,  
As she fights for the penny denied—  
The penny to purchase a measure of milk  
For the boy sobbing fast at her side.*

Preach of patience to Death! Oh, all-seeing God!  
From my lips take the bitterest chalice.  
Better fester and rot in the hulk of the hulks—  
Better swing like a thief from the gallows.

*Tink, chink: 'tis the rain on the roof;  
And the wind in the shivering street;  
Ah, well for the wind and the rain they care not  
For the morrow and something to eat.  
No ghastly beseechings of hunger-blanch'd lips  
Sound mournful wild in their ears,  
Whilst mine is the grief frozen solid and cold,  
And alien to merciful tears.*

I will toil—give me work—labour early and late,  
And none shall smite stouter and stronger—  
Coin blood into bread if it drive from the door  
This coffinless carcase of hunger,

"Lie still, trade is dull; all the markets are crammed  
Little good in the meaningless clamour;  
The furnace is empty, the rust eats its way  
Through chisel, and anvil, and hammer."

*Tink, chink: 'tis the rain on the roof;  
Another day breaks in the skies;  
Its light will look down through the rent overhead  
On haggard and ravenous eyes.  
My poor wife gets up in the glimmering dawn,  
With the cough of the grave at her throat,  
And she covers her shoulders—lean, wasted, and cold—*

With the rags of my twenty-patched coat.  
A spark in the fireplace—a crackle—a gleam,  
And she crouches her down in despair  
To warm her thin hands at a morsel of fire—  
The back of our very last chair—

Rocking and groaning. Oh! woman may God  
Send rest to the pangs of thy sorrow  
There's nothing to sell, and there's nothing to  
pawn,  
And the poor are too friendless to borrow.

*Tink, chink: 'tis the rain on the roof;  
And my little one creeps from his bed,  
Kneels down by his mother, looks up in her face—  
On her shoulders he pillows his head.  
They gaze on the embers, the flame's dying out,  
And closer together they sit:—  
"Have you any bread, mother, for poor little Tom?"  
"My darling! haven't a bit."*

No tears, no repining, no curses, no sighs,  
Pass up from the shivering pair;  
But I hear in the lulls of this tempest of March  
The whisper of voices in prayer.  
"May God grant that father to-day may get work;  
May God give him patience and meekness; . . .  
May God send us comfort, and help in this hour  
Of trial and hunger and weakness."

*Tink, chink: 'tis the rain on the roof;  
Has heaven then truly decreed  
That men of this land—of the Isle of the Saints  
Are to fight with perennial need?  
Is a Christian to starve, to submit, to bow down  
At some high consecrated behest,  
Hugging close the old maxims that "weakness is  
strength,"  
And "whatever is, is for the best"?*

"Bear your woes, O my people, they're badges of  
grace;  
Rebellion's the devil's own snare,  
Of the traitor's appealing to bullet and sword,  
As you value salvation, beware."  
Oh, texts of debasement! Oh, creed of deep  
shame!  
Oh, gospel of infamy treble!  
Who strikes when he's struck, and who takes  
when he starves,  
In the eyes of the Lord is no rebel.

*Tink, chink: 'tis the rain on the roof;  
O prodigal scorers of time,  
In meanness a proof of God's chosen elect—  
Revolution a damnable crime?  
We fight and we struggle and conquer abroad,  
Little recking the pain or the doom;  
We pine, and we starve, till we perish and rot—  
God pity us—only at home.  
I rise to go forth—yet a crust may be got—  
And I think "Is this ever to be?"  
No, no, answers heaven, be true to yourselves,  
'Tis only the true that are free.*

Up, manhood of Ireland, and silence the slaves  
Who work agitation and plunder;  
Up, brothers of Ireland, retemper your souls  
In the red battle's lightning and thunder.

## SOCIALIST NON-STARTER

"I am an Irishman second; I am a Catholic first  
. . . If the Hierarchy gives me any direction with  
regard to Catholic social teaching or Catholic  
moral teaching, I accept without qualification  
in all respects the teaching of the Hierarchy and  
the Church to which I belong."

*Brendan Corish, Dail Debates, Vol. 138, Col. 840,  
April 29, 1953. Quoted by Basil Chubb, Page 103,  
"The Government and Politics in Ireland"*

## Election Retrospect

by JOHN BOYLE

An assessment of the recent General Election result emphasises the underlying conservatism of Irish political and social life. Ignoring for the moment that Fianna Fail (Lynch) timed the election so that the 18-21 age group recently admitted to the franchise were effectively disenfranchised, the youthful so-called radical generation of the late 1960s entered the fray this time to no discernable effect.

The obvious and logical conclusion is that the voting patterns laid down in generations past have been faithfully adhered to. Only liberal media-brainwashed confused "radicals" could have expected different. This being the case, the major interest for socialists lies in the performance of the Labour Party.

Entering into a pre-election coalition pact for the first time with Fine Gael, a party with a history steeped in unashamedly conservative politics and principles, the tactic paid off in terms of a more effective operation of the transfer system under P.R. between the two parties (it is noteworthy that Fine Gael transfers to Labour were of a proportionately higher order than vice versa).

Other than that, however, the significant aspect of the Labour victory is the decline in the Dublin city and other urban areas vote allied to the acquisition of a number of seats in predominantly rural constituencies. Labour is now again largely—as it was in the past—a party of the rural working class (what few there are) and small farmers. There is no evidence, now, that the Labour Party is in any real sense a party of the urban working class.

Socialists should grasp this reality and draw the very obvious lessons. There is nothing to be gained through any form of co-operation or operation within the Labour Party. In the light of the election result—which incidentally confirms beyond a shadow of a doubt that there is no grouping operating in the parliamentary arena (i.e.: the I.L.P., Gardiner Place Sinn Féin, Communist Party and Aontacht Eireann) that can be regarded as holding out any hope for the Irish working class—the opposition to entry into the E.E.C., which was Labour Party policy and was also subscribed to by all other petit-bourgeois or revisionist groups, is now seen for the backward-looking and reactionary political stance than it undoubtedly was.

The Labour Party, in its anti-E.E.C. referendum campaign, was simply reflecting its small farmer and small-scale Irish capitalist base and their respective oppositions, within Irish agriculture and industry, to the development within their twin areas of the monopoly concern.

(continued on back page)

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## WITH BENEFIT OF CLERGY

America has long been a happy hunting ground for Irish Republicans on the make. Financial success, as with so much of U.S. society, is the yardstick by which the progress of Irish-Americans is measured. Provided the right political cocktail is mixed, all the rest comes easily. While Bernadette Devlin's own particular mixture proved somewhat sour to the sensitive political palates of many Irish-Americans, her Westminster colleague, Frank McManus, recently showed himself to be a polished performer when it comes to playing the greenback circuit.

The story headed, "20 Dollars A Plate for I.R.A.," appeared in the Irish Press on February 20. The paper's man in New York, Frank Mc Donald wrote:

*Over 1,200 enthusiastic supporters of the Provisional I.R.A. attended a \$20-a-plate dinner in the heavily Irish American Astoria section of Queens, last week. The generally old and middle-aged crowd, which filled the pink, purple and gold of the Astorian Manor heard Westminster MP Frank McManus . . . assert that through the efforts of the I.R.A., a united Ireland would be achieved in the very near future. Amid cheers and shouts Mr. McManus said: "We will not rest until we see the back of the last British soldier and the last politician leaving our country."*

*The banquet was held in honour of six veterans of the movement—all of them in their seventies—for the active support of the 'cause' over more than 50 years.*

That 'the cause' involved the coercion of a million Northern Protestants into a 'united' Ireland was not considered relevant. No effort was made to explain the Provisional I.R.A.'s 'democratic socialism' to the American people. And the further opportunity of influencing the many powerful U.S. politicians who attended the dinner by contrasting the Provos' 'anti-imperialism' in Northern Ireland with American imperialism in Vietnam was also squandered. But, as the Press report made clear, these things were not too important. Dollar-gathering was the name of the game.

*From the point of view of the Committee, the affair was a moderate success: the nett proceeds amounted to about \$14,000, not counting a total of eight separate cheques (for sums ranging from \$200 to \$3,000) . . . It was the largest Northern Aid fund-raiser in the group's three year history. Previously the Committee has concentrated on smaller, more localised functions. But this banquet was different and because of its sheer numerical size, it attracted a host of national, state and city political figures who graced the dais during the proceedings.*

*Included were the Congressmen, two State Senators and at least half-dozen other luminaries of various rank. Ironically, the assembled multitude reserved their loudest cheers for Congressman Mario Biaggi, who is one of the candidates in the upcoming election for Mayor and who would occupy a similar position with Unionism's John Taylor in the galaxy of the Right. Biaggi, a former and much decorated city policeman, is one of the strongest advocates of 'law 'n order' in the land. Such are the strange contradictions of American politics.*

Despite the Irish Press man's attempt to gloss over the significance of this event, there is nothing ironical or contradictory in the enthusiastic reception given to Congressman Biaggi. It is certain that this new 'law 'n order' champion found himself very much at home in the congenial company of the 'democratic socialist', 'anti-

# Provo Dollars

imperialist', 'revolutionary' supporters of the Provos.

Frank McManus left no doubt about his 'shadow of a gunman' support for the Provisional I.R.A. when he urged the gathering to use their influence with their elected representatives in Congress to pressurise Britain "to make up to the only answer to the Irish Question—a united Ireland". He said "the banquet demonstrated to the world that the Irish-American community stood behind the freedom-fighters in the North to a man and that they were determined to give aid to the beleaguered people of the Six Counties." McManus did not define just who "the beleaguered people" were and he could hardly have been describing the members of Northern Protestant community and the attempt by the Provos to subjugate them.

After the nationalist excesses, it was only natural that the other dominant strand of Irish republicanism should assert itself. And the 20 dollar diners were not disappointed. On hand, like a religious Maria McGuire, was a "revolutionary" nun to sanctify the proceedings. Just as Cardinal Spellman had no doubts about the American campaign in Vietnam, Sister St. Hugh, a Franciscan nun and the editor of the 'militantly Provisional' Irish People—published in New York—gave full backing to the bombing campaign of the Provisional I.R.A. "If the Taoiseach backed-up the real Republicans," she continued "he would have 100% support from people over here".

But at this stage, the whole unreality of the affair got a bit too much for the "Irish Press" man and he felt obliged to conclude his report with a return to sanity.

"While not disputing the sincerity of their convictions, the people who attended the Northern Aid dinner are, after all, more than 3,000 miles from the streets of Belfast and it is all too easy—at that distance—to believe that a united Ireland is 'the only solution'. A recurring and extremely difficult question is: 'But what about Northern Ireland's 1,000,000 Protestants?' It is a question that frequently finds a flimsy answer."

Except, of course by the Northern Protestants themselves, who have repeatedly shown that they have no intention of allowing the I.R.A.—or anybody else—to coerce them into a 'united' Ireland.

(II)

## PENNIES FROM HEAVEN

The first issue of the new *Sunday World*, (March 25) carried an "exclusive dispatch from Jack Deasy in New York titled 'Divine' Aid In

Drumming Up Provo Dollar'." The story stated:

*" . . . Northern Aid has reportedly funnelled upwards of 700,000 dollars into the Provo Camp . . . But never in anyone's memory have the Northern Aid drum beaters looked for 'divine' assistance. Until last week. The pub party in question was held in the Rainbow Tavern in the Sunset park section of Brooklyn, a neighbourhood still strongly laced with Irish immigrants and their Irish-American offspring.*

*The pub was decorated in the colour that is the middle of March. Green cardboard shamrocks, green 'Erin Go Bragh' flags, green leprechauns with top hats and clay pipes and, appropriately hanging over the cash register, the Tricolour. Women wore green chiffon dresses and green eye mascara. Men wore traditional Japanese-made green ties and matched them with green socks.*

These kind of Irish-Americans are a familiar and pathetic sight. Every St Patrick's Day they don their green paper hats and proudly and loudly proclaim their loyalty to "Faith and Fatherland". They have become variously known as "Paper Hat Irishmen" and "St. Patrick's Day Irishmen". They are usually noted for their maudlin, sentimental and superficial attitudes towards the "old country" and their simplistic ideas on the Northern Ireland Conflict. The *Sunday World* report described the well-known scene:

*The talk was predictable St. Patrick's Day talk for when March rolls around each year, a terrible blather is born. Grown men tried to convince one another that their fathers were in the G.P.O. with Connolly in '16. Music filled the pub and people danced, waltzes, quicksteps, the "Stack of Barley".*

*But this story of Provisional I.R.A. fund-raising in New York had a new and novel twist to it. Once again the sacred combination of religion and nationalism in the glorious cause of collecting money to buy Fenian guns to take the North.*

*Then, as the music stopped, a middle-aged man in a blue suit climbed atop a table to address the gathering. A stock speech that has been heard before. 'We must support the freedom fighters on the streets of Belfast, the only freedom fighters on the streets of Belfast, the men, and women of the Provisional I.R.A. . . . People cheered. 'There is only one way to answer the guns of the British Army and that is with Fenian guns!' People cheered again.*

*Someone at the edge of the table handed a large framed picture to the speaker. A picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. The man held the picture at his side, and spoke again. 'In order to keep the struggle going,' he said, 'the freedom fighters need money. We're going to auction off a few items here tonight, and the first is this lovely framed picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour . . . Let's start with the bidding at three dollars,' the man said . . . 'Three dollars,' a man shouted. . . . The bidding escalated to seven, eight, ten, twelve, fifteen, seventeen, twenty one-two-three-four- and five. 'Sold to the man in the grey suit for twenty-five dollars', the man on the table said. . . .*

*The man in the grey suit gazed at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour framed in the picture. The man on the table counted the money. The music started again . . . And now people moved back to the bar for drinks.*

And so the 'Wrap The Green Flag Round Me Boys' danced and drank their way to glory in far away New York, basking in the supernatural glow of the framed picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. The fact that one million Northern Ireland Protestants had other ideas on the Belfast "freedom fighters" did not arise.

ECHOES FROM

— THE —

# BOTTOM DOG

"We must look at life in all its aspects from the point of view of the "Bottom Dog"—the oppressed—be it nation, class, or sex."

VOL. 1 No. 1.

20th October, 1917

Price ½d.

## INTRODUCTORY

In making his bow (wow) to the public The Bottom Dog wishes to offer a word by way of explanation. For a long time he has been the butt of ridicule and odium as well as the target for the cheap sneers of those whose hands are raised against him. He has grown tired of continually grumbling, and bemoaning his unenviable lot. He has seen for himself in the struggle that the "Every-man-for-himself-and-for-the-weakest-to-the-wall" dictum still holds sway. Coming forth from his obscurity to study at closer range the ways of mortals and give vent to his feelings, he trusts that the bones of contention, which he encounters will be readily overcome. Grown weary of his mess of pottage he is out for better fair. If The Bottom Dog bites occasionally and makes himself felt, it will not be his fault; rather will it be the fault of the opponent, who seeks to wipe his feet on him, or kick him about like a football. He believes in the truth of the old saying that "Every Dog has his day" but at the same time he must assert that The Bottom Dog's day appears to be a long way off, shrouded in the misty future. To work at hand then—hastening the day of the Bottom Dog.

## A MANLY DEMAND

A six hour day, five working days per week and £1 a day, is Tom Mann's programme. Some of our local "sweaters" will collapse when they hear this.

## THE GIBSON GIRLS

Grave murmurs of discontent are heard from the girls employed at Gibson's, Mulgrave Street. They get something like 7/- or 8/- a week and have to work from 8 till 8; some nights even as late as 11 or 12. Quite recently we heard that a gentleman bearing the unmistakable signs of a

Factory Inspector called one night but did not succeed in gaining admission, the lights in the establishment being extinguished and the girls there told to hide themselves. When leaving for home that night late they were cautioned if they were asked why were they working so late to state they were coming from a wake of a relative of one of their fellow-workers! If these long hours and miserable wages continue there will soon be a few "wakes" and some vacant places in Gibson's. The Agent had better wake up and treat the girls as well as he treats his dogs. The girls too must get into a Trade Union.

## THE BOTTOM DOG'S SHARE

He makes everything,  
He makes overcoats and freezes,  
He builds palaces and lives in shacks,  
He builds automobiles and walks home,  
He makes fine tobacco and chews scraps,  
He makes carriages and pushes a wheel barrow,  
He makes meerschaum pipes and smokes clay,  
He digs the gold and has his teeth filled with cement,  
He makes patent leather shoes and wears brogans.

VOL. 1 No. 2.

27th October, 1917

Price ½d.

## PLOTS

We believe that the right note was struck at the Plottolders' meeting on Sunday night by the Chairman, Mr. Stevenson, when he stated that to settle the housing problem satisfactorily the money expended on a patchwork scheme would be useless. "Leave the slums alone to the owners to rot, and go into the country where habitable dwellings could be erected with a garden, large or small, attached." The prolongation of the unfortunate war has taught the workers that if money can be found to slaughter human beings it can and should be found to decently house the wage-earner, the best asset to the nation.

The B.D. bared his teeth at the Corporation meeting when he saw a big number of the self-styled labour representatives leave before the resolution forwarded by the Plottolders' Executive, demanding more land for plots, was come to, thus knocking the resolution on the head. The B.D. knows full well that some of our City Fathers are above handling a spade—they leave it to the common workman or the serf as they would have him. The B.D. doesn't believe in this and says it is far nobler and manly to handle a spade and extract from mother earth some of the treasures in the shape of food than living on one's wits and "backsheese." And these call themselves Labour Men. Ye Gods! Heel up Dog!!

# Eat, Drink and be Merry. . . for tomorrow we Diet

Limerick's middle classes are beginning to experiment with the ways of their more sophisticated counterparts in Dublin and London. The products of the provincial backwater "culture" that produced nothing other than mindless rugby playing snobs from Crescent College, are now apeing more "with-it" societies.

## WE ROBBED AND PLUNDERED BUT . . .

"The other unsuccessful Fianna Fail candidate in Mayo West, Mr. Joseph Leneghan, Belmullet, said 'I've made my money out of it and I'm looking forward to it. I'm not a bit disappointed, as I got good innings out of it.'"

(Irish Press, 2/3/73).

It came as no surprise to hear that a £20,000 Beauty and Keep Fit Centre has been opened in William Street, where for £35 a year the jaded bourgeoisie can be touched up by delicate female hands.

Behind the exotic sounding venture is fish and chip man, Orlando de Vito and former Liberal Party candidate, Mick Crowe. The affluent society has tended to make the middle classes soft, it was said at the opening, so now this "weight wonderland" is to be the answer to their prayers.

This news was just dying away when another treat for the Limerick "Captains of Industry" was announced. In "fashionable downtown O'Connell Street", a "revolution" was taking place. A new cocktail bar and restaurant, opened

a few weeks ago, was attracting a growing clientele of professional people and business executives according to an advertisement feature in the Irish Independent.

Lo and behold, as the preaching priest would say, it transpired that "hostesses" would serve the drink and meals . . . wearing evening dresses, of course. They were to be young and elegant. "These young ladies are widely experienced and come from many different places," said the report.

So it would seem that the Limerick bourgeoisie are not going to be left behind when it comes to sampling fashionable food and drink. The two services should be a decided asset.

The merchants and their professional colleagues can now not only afford to nourish themselves but the means of painlessly shedding the surplus value are now close to hand.

What does the Social Service Centre say to this carry on . . . where are the appeals to christian charity . . .? If these class establishments do anything they will serve to highlight the growing gap between those "who have" and those "who have not" in the city.

It is about time that "those who have not" asked themselves why . . .?

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## ELECTION RETROSPECT

(continued from page 5)

Labour has now found its proper resting place in coalition with a party of thoroughly conservative men, and its only problem will be to avoid appearing too reactionary in that set-up! If opposition to the hopefully more realistic policies of such as Cruise O'Brien, Fitzgerald and Costello emerges in the coalition, undoubtedly it will emanate from the direction of that arch-reactionary clique of Labour T.D.'s such as Thornley, Coughlan, Spring (Treacy having been cleverly stymied by Cosgrave), and possibly one or two disappointed Fine Gael men.

What of the two major parties?

There is no doubt that one of the priorities of the National Coalition will be to revise the constituency boundaries, so skilfully engineered by Kevin Boland in 1969 to ensure victory for Fianna Fáil in that year's General Election. In Dublin alone the replacement of a number of 4-seaters by 5-seat constituencies will almost inevitably mean in all cases a gain of one seat per revised constituency to the National Coalition. Boland's strategy was quite simple—with 4-seaters, 40% of the vote was (generally) sufficient under P.R. to hold two of the seats; with 3-seaters, 50% could (and did in 1969 for F.F.) secure two out of the three seats. Besides the Dublin alterations, the general replacement of a number of marginal three-seaters by four-seaters will eliminate any possibility that F.F. could hope to swing back the extra seat that in many cases they lost this time.

The outlook for F.F. is (fortunately) quite bleak. It was only during the election campaign that the internal splits that sundered the party in the past few years began to bite. There may now

be further dissension ahead to be sharpened by the virtually inevitable, however long postponed, Lynch-Haughey clash. Unless F.F. can avoid this possibility its days as the dominant political party in Ireland are a thing of the past.

Fine Gael, meanwhile, can go from strength to strength. They will doubtless have to go cautiously for a while, but there is no doubt that on the law and order issue (which in the Republic at the present means dealing with the I.R.A.) the prevailing mood will be for a firmer line than that pursued by Fianna Fáil. If Cosgrave finds himself unable to follow his conscience on this matter (if he is prevented by the Labour "Republicans"), he could quite confidently go to the country, and with the constituencies suitably revised, be returned with a sufficient majority for National Coalition that will make dependence on the backwoodsmen unnecessary. A study of patterns of voting in General Elections which followed quickly after the previous one since the foundation of the state will serve to confirm the likelihood of this prognosis.

In the long run the possibility clearly emerges that Labour will become such a harmonious adjunct of Fine Gael that they will be painlessly absorbed. A modest "leftward" shift within Fine Gael (which the more forward-looking members of that party have been pushing for almost ten years—remember the "young tigers" and the "Just Society") would facilitate this potential development.

While some of these considerations are long-term ones, they point up the sort of void that could very likely emerge in the field of working class politics, and which may serve as the launching pad for a principled left-wing party in Ireland to take advantage of the situation.



## Eviction Economics

ANNIVERSARY REVIEW

"The Limerick Socialist broadsheet had alleged that the eviction story had been suppressed in Limerick. But I established since that local newspapers had decided not to publish it pending detailed checking of the facts."

This statement was made by Limerick reporter Noel Smith, in an article titled, "The Real Truth Behind That Limerick Eviction", in the Sunday Independent on April 23rd last year. The eviction referred to took place on March 28th, 1972. In the year which has passed since that date nothing has been published in any local paper about the eviction. The "detailed checking of the facts" formula has been shown to be nothing more than an unprincipled cover for Smith to write his way out of an awkward situation.

The eviction was carried out at 10 Newenham Street. The house and two adjoining houses had been bought by the wealthy motor dealer, Tony O'Mara, from local solicitors, Gordon Holmes and Dermot Morrissey-Murphy. Possession of the second house at No. 11 was also acquired, but the third tenant at No. 12 refused to be shifted without the provision of suitable alternative accommodation. So O'Mara had to be content with getting his hands on two out of the three houses.

Shortly after the four old women had been evicted and the furore had died down, O'Mara began to renovate the two houses. But the work was not going to be just a straightforward building job: the plan was to convert the houses into as many flats as possible. There was no shortage of money, and so within six months the work was completed and the houses transformed into a mini-flatland.

The housing shortage in Limerick has been intensified by the influx of young workers into the city to work in factories such as Ferenka and in the Shannon Industrial Estate. O'Mara, therefore, had little difficulty in finding tenants for his new single and double flats.

The evicted tenant from No. 12 has been paying £11.17 per month, but this sum rated as chicken-feed in the changed set-up. With rents ranging from £4.50 to £6.50 per week for each flat, the financial gains for the landlord soon became obvious. With ten flats in one house and nine flats in the other, O'Mara is now sitting on yet another nest-egg.

Even after the cost of the renovation expenses, O'Mara's feat in increasing the rent of each house from less than £3 to £45 per week is a notable one! By capitalist standards a 1,500% increase in rent revenue is a tidy business transaction. And the four evicted women . . .

## THE MONTH'S MIND

## MAIDEN SPEECH

It was a very moving and dignified scene as the newest member of the City Council received his robe of office from the Mayor, Cllr. Paddy Kiely.

"Who's your man with the long hair," asked Cllr. Mickey Earls.

"Oh that's Dinny O'Malley," answered Ald. Mick Lipper, while a disturbed Ald. Steve Coughlan shouted: "Are we being invaded by long haired weirdies?"

"Why didn't Dessie arrest him . . . he looks like a teddy-boy or a subversive to me," said Cllr. Earls.

"Don't be using those big words," advised Ald. Coughlan.

"Look who's talking," retorted Cllr. Jack Bourke, "the man who didn't want to be a Minister . . . you'd get a better Minister in a lucky-bag."

"Well actually regarding this word "subversive", I agree with Cllr. Earls that we must maintain certain standards, which will ensure the confidence of the public in the working of democracy," said Cllr. Tony Bromell.

At that moment there was a dramatic intervention in the form of a blonde young woman, who threw an old shawl over her head and started to recite Mise Eire.

"Who's your wan?" asked Cllr. Earls. "I'll have you know she is an Abbey actress", replied an offended Cllr. Jack Bourke.

"I thought that only fishermen and tripe came from the Abbey", murmured Cllr. Earls . . . anyway when it comes to acting give me Brigitte Bardot any day of the week.

## REJECTED

Limerick City Council last night rejected the British Government White Paper on the proposal of Cllr. Clem Casey. "There is too many big words in it," he said and called for the inclusion of a few pin-ups.

## DANCER

Ald. Steve Coughlan, T.D., denied that he had added to his numerous and distinguished achievements this week by winning a medal at Feile Luimni for tap-dancing. "Twas unfair," said Cllr. Jack Bourke, "he has a lot of experience flirting from gimmick to gimmick".

## SINGER

Another Council member was honoured last night when it was announced that Cllr. Mickey Earls is to play the male lead in the forthcoming operatic production by the Limerick Harbour Board Commissioners called "The Pirates of Limerick". "We got him for a song," said a spokesman.

## CHARGED

Prominent Councillor, Jack Bourke was arrested last night by Gardai and lodged in a padded cloakroom on orders from the Noise Abatement Committee of the Chamber of Commerce. "We're giving him a taste of his own medicine, as he has been driving us mad with his loudspeakers," said a spokesman.